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RISK

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

C. F. BATES.

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Rev. Karl Knortz.

With compliments of the Author.

Feb., 1880.

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RISK,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

CHARLOTTE FISKE BATES.



BOSTON:
A. WILLIAMS AND CO.
1879.

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DEDICATION.

When early flowers were all ablow
In April of the long-ago,
Awoke the life that gave me mine.
O mother! hurt with time and care
And burdens thou hast bent to bear,
In spite of all that has gone by
How quick is still the ear, the eye;
How light is still that heart of thine!

The spring so lingers in it yet,
That I life's season half forget
In happy shining of the sun.
May long, glad days arise on thee,
Else long and sad the days for me:
Yet when thy years again are told,
We shall be together as of old,
Where years and seasons are as one.

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RISK, AND OTHER POEMS.

RISK.



N the quiet of the evening
Two are walking in unrest;
Man has touched a jealous nature, —
Anger burns in woman's breast.

These are neither wed nor plighted,
Yet the maybe hangs as near
And as fragrant as the wild-rose
Which their garments hardly clear.

And as briery, too, you fancy?
Well, perhaps so — some sad morn
One or both may, for a moment,
Wish they never had been born.

Happy quips and honest pleadings
Meet with silence or a sneer;
But more keenly has she listened
Since she vowed she would not hear.

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Now a great oak parts the pathway.
"Nature gratifies your mood:
To the right, — let this divide you;
It will all be understood."

So Caprice, with childish weakness,
Yet with subtlety of thought,
Whispered in the ear of woman.
Love, with dread, the answer sought.

Was it superstitious feeling
Struck at once the hearts of two?
Had he seen proud eyes half-sorry
For what little feet must do?

For he stretched an arm towards her,
Folding nothing but the air,
Saying nothing, — just the motion
Drew, without offending there.

In the quiet of the evening
Two are walking back again;
At the oak their happy voices
Whisper of a vanished pain.

What if they to-night be plighted,
And the maybe hangs more near
And more fragrant than the wild-rose
Which their garments hardly clear!

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And more briery, too, you fancy?
Well, perhaps so. Thorns are ill,
But Love draws them out so kindly,
One must trust him, come what will.

THE SOUL OF THE FLOWERS.



ERE are no flowers in bloom,
Yet fragrance fills the room,
And beauteous shapes and colors bless my sight;
Rich clusters of the rose
In their own green repose,
And midst those large, dark leaves reach beauty's height.

The past and I can meet
In knots of violets sweet;
Oh, what a mystic gift God gave these flowers!
We draw in their strange breath,
And grow as still as death,
In living over joys that have been ours.

I see the straw primrose,
Round which dark pansies close;
And heliotrope with tiny, brimming cup;
Carnations scent the air;
And amaryllis fair,
Hinting of Virgil's verse, seems looking up.

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All these and more appear,
Though none of them are here;
They looked and breathed upon me months ago —
And died — how brief their stay!
Yet what I threw away
Was but their body, not their soul, I know.

UNSAID.

FOR days and weeks upon the lip has hung
A precious something for an absent ear;
Some tender confidence but lately sprung,
Some dear confession that but one must hear.

The heart repeats it over day by day,
And fancies how and when the words will fall;
What answering smile upon the face will play,
What tender light will linger over all.

But eager eyes that watch for one alone
May grow reluctant; for the open gate
Lets in, with him, perchance a guest unknown,
On whom slow words of courtesy must wait.

Or when the presence waited for has come,
It may be dull or cold, too sad or light:
A look that shows the heart away from home
Can often put the dearest words to flight.

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Perhaps the time of meeting, or the form,
  May chill or wither what we longed to say:
What fits the sunshine will not fit the storm,—
  What blends with twilight, jars with noon of day.

Again, when all things seem our wish to serve,
  Full opportunity may strike us dumb,—
May sink our precious thoughts in deep reserve,
  And to the surface bid the lightest come.

And often ere our friend is out of sight,
  We start: the thing can scarce be credited,—
We have been silent, or our words been trite,
  And here 's the dearest thing of all unsaid!

REST.



N deepest weariness I lay so still,
  One might have thought it death;
For hush of motion and a sleep of will
  Gave me but soundless breath.

And yet I slept not; only knew that Rest
  Held me all close to her:
Softly but firmly fettered to her breast,
  I had no wish to stir.

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"Oh, if," I thought, "death would but be like this! —
Neither to sleep nor wake,
But have for ages just this conscious bliss, —
That perfect rest I take."

The soul grows often weary, like the flesh:
May rest pervade her long,
While she shall feel the joy of growing fresh
For heavenly work and song!

THE PROBLEM.

TWO parted long, and yearning long to meet,
Within an hour the life of months repeat;
Then come to silence, as if each had poured,
Into the other's keeping, all his hoard.

And when the lip seems drained of all its store,
Each inly wonders why he says no more.
Why, since they meet, does mutual need seem small,
And what avails the presence, after all?

Though silent thought with those we love is sweet,
The heart finds every meeting incomplete;
And with the dearest there must sometimes be
The wide and lonely silence of the sea.

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INTIMATIONS OF GENIUS.



HAWTHORN bough in full and snowy bloom ;
Strange birds that flitted ever by the ship ;
Built on a broken branch, a little nest
Upon whose eggs brooded the parent bird ;
Things unfamiliar floating on the tide —
All these to great Columbus gave the sign
Of the new land he was about to touch.
Such sights are manifold with thee, my soul !
Such hints are breaking on thine eager eye.
Strange fancies brood or else go winging past ;
Fresh forms and growths of Nature's life appear ;
Things old as time, yet to the old world, new ;
The new-expressions of accustomed thought.
Thou art already on a new world's verge,
That mighty world is Genius — ah ! but know
Thou canst expect no better fate than his
Who found that other ! poverty, neglect,
Follow the fate of him who finds a world,
Whether it be of matter or of thought.
Not now, not here, will be thy claim allowed,
But long years hence when thou hast left thy clay,
And all thy shackles moulder with its dust.

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Then shall men know the greatness of thy work,
The littleness of those that lived with thee.
Through mortal hurts, immortal glories come, —
Push on to kneel upon thy new-found shore,
And take possession in thy Sovereign's name!

DREAMS.



HAT do we call them? Idle, airy things
Broken by stir or sigh,
Or else sweet slumber's golden, gauzy wings
That into heaven can fly.

What may we call them? Miracles of might.
For such they are to us
When the grave bursts and yields us for a night
Some risen Lazarus.

And if no trace or memory of death
Cling to the throbbing form,
And in a dream we feel the very breath
Coming so fast and warm, —

Then all is real; we know life's waking thrill
While precious things are told;
Ay, such a dream is even stranger still
Than miracle of old.

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FLUCTUATIONS OF THOUGHT.

WANT.



HERE is the power I fancied mine?
Can I have emptied my soul of thought?
In yesterday's fulness lay no sign
That to-day would be a time of drought.
What if thought fail me for evermore?
The world that awaits a well-filled plan
Must, railing, cry at my long-closed door,
"He cannot finish what he began."

PLENTY.

Thought dashes on thought within my soul:
Time will not serve for the bounding-line.
I think it would fail to mete the whole
If old Methuselah's years were mine.
Like the famous spring that is sometimes dry,
Then flows with a river's whelming might,
The current of thought now runs so high
It covers the earthy bed from sight.

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IN GOOD TIME.



OME of God's truest friends yet dread to die:
Their faith but props the weight of daily need,
And in confusion oft they question why
Beneath the thought of death, it turns a reed.

Beside dear graves God's friends must often weep,
Conning His revelation with a pain:
The promise seems too marvellous to keep,
That dust shall rise and claim its soul again.

The changing chrysalis, the springing seed,
And every miracle that Nature shows
To help weak man hold firmly to his creed,
In some fierce agony for nothing goes.

And though the creed be firm, a pang lies here:
Can what was once so precious to the sight
In any other form be quite so dear?
The human dreads the resurrection-light.

O struggling hearts! in such a mood as this
Not too severely tax your souls with sin:
Doubt not your heirship to eternal bliss,
Because the future throws faint light within.

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God sees that some would never be content
To work their work if faith should trench on sight:
The inner eye, on morning's glory bent,
Would make some souls impatient for the night.

God lets faith lend His glory as we need
To do life's duty — rarely for its ease;
But when the hands have wrought their last good deed,
Faith shines in fulness till the spirit sees.

REPROOF.



HEN children, heedless in their eager play,
Seem casting half their innocence away
In some coarse word or deed that makes us start,
Waking a painful wonder in the heart,

We, ripe and righteous, blame the little ones;
Then quick to God, poor, trembling Conscience runs,
For while our sternness brings an instant hush,
The cheek is kindling with a guilty blush.

The older heart remembers its dark room
Wherein it would not have the children come;
Where, when they sleep, the worldly-wise steal in,
Exchanging thoughts that have to do with sin.

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And then it scorns this place that dreads surprise,
And would like children live without disguise,
Longing to have the secret soul become
Choice as the eye and ear that guard the home.

THE SPHINX AT MOUNT AUBURN.



OW grand she is enthroned among the dead,
The graves like trophies all about her spread!
Have these not perished as in fable old
With some unfathomed riddle in their hold?

But what the riddle that she now doth ask,
The might of man so fatally to task?
Well may we fancy "What are Life and Death?"
To be the question that has hushed their breath.

Sphinx! Life and Death in thee their type have found,
For so are they in mystic oneness bound;
Fruitful as woman, beautiful as she,
Dread as the lion in his majesty.

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NATURE'S LENT.

HER carnival is over, and the glow
Of crowded, varied splendor is no more;
The pulses hot with revel now beat low,
While great convulsive tears she doth outpour.

Hark! even now she gives a long-drawn wail;
Low in the dust is all her beauty cast.
Who lately turned the artist's power pale
Now in a naked sorrow keeps her fast.

She will grow pure at last and be content
When heaven's whiteness covers all of her;
Her heart will feel, while wears away the Lent,
The hope of Easter's new-leaved glory stir!

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THE PARADOX.



WISH that the day were over,
The week, the month, and the year;
Yet life is not such a burden
That I wish the end were near.

And my birthdays come so swiftly
That I meet them grudgingly:
Would it be so were I longing
For the life that is to be?

Nay: the soul, though ever reaching
For that which is out of sight,
Yet soars with reluctant motion,
Since there is no backward flight.



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THE NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

"  F all the gifts of this joyous day
I wonder what is the costliest,
What the most beautiful Love will lay
In the hold of her whom he loves the best."

This curious question crossed the heart
Of a happy girl, when first she woke
With many a rosy hope astart,
Just as the dawn of the New Year broke.

But ere the face of the day grew old,
She saw another as young as she
Fall into slumber so deep and cold
That a look was a sense of eternity.

She thought of a precious gift she wore,
New, and chosen for this new day;
And looking at it, she wept the more
Thinking of her who had gone away.

"No New-Year's gift is for her, alas!
My joy she has missed, the poor, pale thing!
How hard it is that she had to pass
Beyond the hope of a lover's ring!"

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But lo! she dreamed of the maid that night,
And was dumb at the beauty that she wore,
Yet out of the glory of the light
There stole a voice she had heard before:

"Of all the gifts of the fair New Year,
Mine was the costliest and the best;
A kiss from God! and it drew me here
To be in his Paradise of rest."

LATE.

THREE wandering minstrels halted at my gate
Just as the day was sinking out of sight,
And all the rapture music can create
Possessed my being with unwonted might.

Lest just a drop of such sweet joy I spill,
I leaned without to catch the low-linked tone,
When through my frame there crept a damping chill,
And from the thinning bough, a dry leaf blown,

With boding rustle, swept my lifted brow
And slowly whirled below to cheek and throat;
What nameless feeling searched my spirit now
With every rising, every falling note!

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Why came this music not on summer eves,
Whose warm, fresh beauty seems a part of it?
I longed for such when greenness filled the leaves,
And fanned by them, one all the night could sit.

Ah! it must be so in the life of each: —
When at our door the waited-for doth wait,
If for its full fruition we but reach,
The chill and rustle make us feel it late.

DEFORMITY'S SOLILOQUIES.

FIRST.



SPLENDID woman! when you see another
Bearing about deformity's keen thorn,
Withhold that added pain which makes me smother
This bitter cry, uprising from your scorn:

"Fool! Did I make this ugly, ill-built dwelling?
Do not I love all beauty more than thou?
Is not contempt within my own breast swelling
Sharper than that which mars thy fairness now?

"Ah! happy thought for such as I to cherish,
That Death's dark ruin yet must ravage thee;
He spoils indeed, when such as thou art perish,
But having naught, I grudge him naught of me!"

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SECOND.

Was sight blessed ever with a fairer creature?
Her form and face made music for the eye,
And such her wondrous tenderness of feature,
That I, poor cripple, drew no envious sigh.

From out her beauty there was something stealing
Too high for common pity, far too deep;
As if her soul tried on my sick heart's feeling,
And could, to think I wore it ever, weep.

And then her face shone bright, as if beholding
Some signal glory for what Time denied;
For me, here cast in this misshapen moulding,
A tenfold beauty on the Other Side!

THE WISH.

A LITTLE child white-robed for sleep
Is lying with upturned eyes;
The mother is singing; the moon looks in,
The little one dreamily cries:

"Come nearer, nearer me, great moon,
And make me just as bright
As the angels, mother sings about,
Are, up with God to-night."

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A little child white-robed for sleep
Is lying with closèd eyes;
The mother is weeping; the moon looks in
On her who will never arise.

Nearer the great moon seems to come,
Wrapping her in its light,—
Ay, brighter than moon or star, in Heaven
She shines with God to-night.

MYSTERY.

THE vanished form which is of all most dear
I cannot image in my thought to-day,
While many another rises full and clear
That I could well forbear to miss alway.

The face I used to pass upon the street,
But pass no more, looks out upon me still:
Why is the sight of him thus incomplete
Whom Love depicted with a master-skill?

I strain the inward eye for just a trace
Of him who sat to Love a year ago:
Why thus disjoined the precious form and face,
When a mere stranger's meet and greet me so?

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Ah! Grief that works like age, but weirder still,
Turning the young to old in one short night!
Is it not she obscures so at her will
What hung upon my soul in colors bright?

Priceless the darkened masterpiece to-day.
Although the centuries have made it dim,
They cannot steal the master's trace away:
The faintest curve or cast will tell of him.

And so the relics of this master, Love,
Through cycle-days of grief though grown obscure,
Dearer than all the vivid pictures prove:
Each dimmed and isolated trait is pure.

THE TEST.



OW mixed the faith of every human soul!
Nor even two, since first the world began,
Have more than matched the colors as a whole;
The differing shades must unitize the man.

Yet if the faith but have Redemption's red,
The royal purple of Divinity,
And the Light's gold in one sweet glory wed,
What matters it if minor tints there be?

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And if the soul cannot define its creed,
Or, knowing, hide it utterly from men;
If the white ray shine through the daily deed,
No primal color can be wanting then.

CONSECRATION.

A LOVER'S MOOD.



LL the kisses that I have given,
I grudge from my soul to-day,
And of all I have ever taken,
I would wipe the thought away.

How I wish my lips had been hermits,
Held apart from kith and kin,
That fresh from God's holy service,
To Love's they might enter in.



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THE CHILD'S GREETING.



S if the outgrowth of the virgin's form,
Sweet, pure white flowers upon her grave are blowing,
And overcasting all they know of her,
Thither a woman and a child are going.

"Is she in there?" repeats the little voice.
"Her dust, dear child; the spirit is in Heaven."
But as the old, true answer left the lips,
The child was kneeling, as at morn and even.

And lo! she kissed the flowers with tender mouth,
As though she feared to wake a living sleeper,
Looked upward, bent, and kissed them all again,
Now with a fervor holier and deeper.

She used to press that maiden's perfect cheek
With kisses made of childish love and wonder,
And now these petals seem to hold a life
From which her own cannot be drawn asunder.

Oh! would that every heart which aches with loss,
Had a sweet faith, that like this dear child kneeling,
Might kiss the pale, pure hopes that grow from grief,
Turning, like them, toward the Place of Healing.

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EVIL THOUGHT.



FORM not always dark but ever dread,
That sometimes haunts the holiest of all;
God's audience-room, the chamber of the dead,
He ventures here, to woo or to appall.

When the soul sits with every portal wide,
Joyful to drink the air and light of God,
This Dark One rushes through with rapid stride,
Leaving the print of evil where he trod.

Sometimes he enters like a thief at night;
And breaking in upon the stillest hour
Startles the soul to tremble with affright
Lest she be pinioned by so foul a power.

Again we see his shadow, feel his tread,
And just escape that strange and captive touch;
Perhaps, by some transfixing wonder led,
We look till drawn within his very clutch.

O valorous souls! so strong to meet the foe,
O timid souls! yet brave in flight of wing,
Secure and happy ones who seldom know
The agony this visitant can bring,

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Have mercy on your brothers housed so ill,
Too weak or blinded any force to wield;
Judging their deeds, this fiend remember still. —
Christ pity those who cannot use His shield!

THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN'S WISH.



HOU strokest back my heavy hair
With smothered praises in thy touch,
Thy long, proud look doth call me fair
Before thy lips have vowed me such.

And when between each long caress
Thou gazest at me held apart,
And with impulsive tenderness
Refoldest closer to thy heart,

Over love's deep, within thine eyes,
I see the artist's rapture brood;
And sometimes will this thought arise;
(O Love, why must a fear intrude!)

What if some sudden thing, as dread
As that which happened yesterday,
Should write my name among the dead
And steal all but my soul away;

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Or, leaving still a feeble life,
  Should make me ugly, foul to see:
Couldst thou then call my soul thy wife,
  Wouldst thou then love this very me?

Lest I miss aught of thy heart's whole,
  When changed by some dire mystery,
Would that this dust that clothes my soul
  Immortal as itself might be!

Or else that some strange power were thine,
  To see my soul itself alway;
And love this fragile form of mine,
  As but its likeness wrought in clay.

CHARLES SUMNER.

WHAT those still lips have eloquently said
Over the nation's wise and mighty dead,
May well be blended for his eulogy.
Could one more truthful or sublimer be?

Soon will the sculptor vex his cunning skill
To fix in marble what he moulds in will;
But yet what thousands have outstript his art,
And crowned a cenotaph within the heart.

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What rich material! Oh, how strong and white
Must be the deeds that reach immortal height!
In countless hearts do such memorials rise,
And there love wreathes them, with uplifted eyes.

THE WRONG FINGER.



DROPPED fresh violets on an open book;
As fresh and sweet as they, the reader's face,
Although it wore no favor in its look,
And met me only with a common grace.

"Thank you for bringing me these thoughts of spring."
And as she spoke, she slipped with childlike air
A long-stemmed violet in her simple ring,
"Why! what a splendid amethyst I wear."

"A happy fancy! May it further go?
The first, not third, is for my amethyst."
With lover's daring, waiting not for "No,"
Her fair troth-finger I both bound and kissed.

* * * * *

The dawning spring now finds me growing old,
But midst the scent of violets turning gray;
And in my dear wife's well-worn band of gold
I slip a violet for the past, to-day.

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THE CENTENNIAL BABY.

1876.

THE South and East, the West and North,
Have poured their million marvels forth;
And now, withdrawn they are, at last,
While this dear wonder clings here fast.
Ah! Heaven's own work outstrips the rest
In this sweet baby at my breast;
Seeing whose face as smooth and white
As lilies breaking into light,
And eyes across whose deep, strange seas,
Thought sails as sailed the Genoese—
I think of some whose time-stained face
Has nowhere an unchannelled place,
Whose eyes are busy now no more,
Where Thought lies stranded on the shore,
Yet who, a hundred years ago,
Breathed as this infant smiling so!
And will you linger long as they
To count your hundredth natal day?
Oh! rather might God see it good
To give immortal babyhood,
And let this signal year of birth
Bear back its treasure from the earth.

Google

A kindly cruel wish is this
For those who own the lips they kiss!
The poet's thought, the artist's look,
Fit best the picture and the book
And dreamy breast to which you come,
Not that on which you make your home.
Ah! beauteous thing, if you were mine,
I 'd linger not in shade, but shine;
In present bounty chase away
Thought of a hundred years' decay,
Nor grudge to think this lovely one
Might be a centenarian;
Nay! I should wish to be one, too,
Rather than say good-by to you!

BRYANT.

I.

THE POET'S BIRTHPLACE.



MID these haunts a poet's boyhood drew
The inspiring breath of Nature and of God;
On his young vision broke divinely true,
While through these very woodland ways he trod,
That View of Death that soothes the spirit so,
That perfect work of life's imperfect age;
In this doth Genius clearly, grandly show

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How soon her own may claim their heritage.
Here myriad thought-tones swept his being through,
Which, linked and blended in some after-time
Midst the world's noise, to finished music grew,
Rolling forth chords, now tender, now sublime.
Here the fringed gentian of the poet blows;
Yielding dim odor, yellow violets still
Jewel Spring's naked bosom till it glows,
While yet the air holds fast its wintry chill.
Nature, as grateful for her true son's love,
At his return seems pouring out her joy;
Shows him new blossoms in some leafy cove,
Yet shares with him far memories of the boy;
And here the laurelled poet loves to come,
And finds his soul, despite the years, at home.

II.

THE POET'S DEATH.



EATH ever comes too soon to good and great
For the poor world they leave, come when it will;
And he whose strong, symmetric life is still,
Seems dying early, though his year be late.

To time's decay unwonted bounds he set;
Although his age was as the mellow sheaf,
His summer fame had dropped no autumn leaf—
Can this not hush a little our regret?

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And just as though His singer's wish were heard
To leave the summer here—not winter gloom,
God gave to June's sweet mouth the blessed Come!
But what an absence through that answered word!

Nor is it strange her beauty should be dim
With unaccustomed outflow of her tears—
With such a poet's love for fourscore years,
What could she do but weep for loss of him!

Yet will she give her brightness to his rest,
Fulfil his asking with her bloom and smile,
And even light the face of Doom awhile
From myriad roses glowing on her breast.

The Present wants him—yet for best relief
Leans on the Past and Future—ah! how dear
To read what he once felt about them here,
And feel his nearness in his sweet belief.

III.

THE BIRTHDAY AFTER DEATH.

NOVEMBER lays our very losses bare
Stripping a shadowy solace with the leaf;
The stark, reft branches sharply cut the air,
Giving a naked poignancy to grief.

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Yet, too, this thought with subtle comfort steals —
No secret now between the earth and sky!
All open unto heaven the spirit feels
While gazing there with unobstructed eye.

Twelve months ago within the poet's home
Unfelt the lateness of the life and year;
Around him warm remembrance gave its bloom,
While his fresh thought retained its summer cheer.

In this dead birthday, how revives the last!
Friends, gifts, and greetings — then he welcomed all! —
Thinking how much his utterance in the past
With deepest faith this absence could forestall,

And count those present who had gone to God;
We offer in our heart the old-time word,
Nor lose the answer for the new year's sod;
In clear, sweet verse of his, it still is heard.



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A CHARACTER.



IS face is truly of the Roman mould,
He bears within the heart of Cato, too;
Although his look may seem severe and cold,
He never would be false to truth or you.

And deepest feeling hides about the mouth;
His soul-wind blows not always from the north,
But sometimes also from the gentle south,
And then, like flowers, the tender words steal forth.

The light and fickle still have love to spare,
If Death has taken from them even thrice;
But she who has this noble's love to wear
May know it never will be given twice.

Yes, whom he chooses may be always sure
That no one else will ever take her place;
Of his whole heart eternally secure,
Less need she tremble at Death's chilling face.

And should she leave him, he will not wax weak
With noisy woe, till Solace bare her breast;
Not in those soft and soothing arms would seek
To dim the sense of loss in childish rest.

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Nay! such as he, not months and years alone,
Will keep the grave's grass green, its marble white;
The cherished rose will blow about the stone
Till hands that plighted troth shall reunite.

A WISH FOR BY-AND-BY.



IDST the scant foliage of an old, gnarled tree
Outside my door,
The birds are joyous as spring birds can be,
And there outpour
A longer sweetness than the rich in green
Hear from their choristers less often seen.

When we are old, with graces almost gone;
Like birds in spring
Within us, still, may fresh young hopes sing on
With resting wing;
And in full sunshine of our second May
The happy children love to sing and play!



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TREADING THE CIRCLE.



O far, so far gone out of sight,
My strained eyes follow thee no more;
Thou to the left, I to the right,
Never to meet as heretofore.

Yet though the distance grows so wide,
We tread Love's circle year by year;
We are nearer on the other side
The farther we are sundered here.

SPRING IN WINTER.



OR me there is no rarer thing
Than, while the winter 's lingering,
To taste the blessedness of spring.

Were this the spring, I now should sigh
That aught were spent; — but rich am I!
Untouched spring's golden sum doth lie.

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MAKE THINE ANGEL GLAD.



ROM the morning even until now,
Evil over thee full power hath had;
Oh, remember late the shattered vow!
Turn to God, and make thine angel glad.

Sin will seek to snare thy heart again;
Though her beauty make thee almost mad,
Though resistance make thee pale with pain,
Turn to God, and make thine angel glad.

GOD'S NAME.



RE Guilt and Ignorance the only ones
Who with this name their daily lightness trim?
Are there not many called His filial sons
That use it daily without thought of Him?

And when I hear the idle utterance
Of that which means so much to human souls,
I think how blessèd, could I hear it once
From him whose very speech, God's wish controls.

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It must be often thought of, though unheard,
By one who lives so high and pure as he ;
It were Faith's whole confession in a word
From lips like his — how sacred would it be !

HUMAN FACES.



ORDS have been spoken that none may tell,
Two have been drinking at love's deep well,
And the World intrudes once more ;
But it seeks in vain an apocalypse, —
From quiet faces no vestige slips
Of what has just gone before.

Up towards heaven or down towards hell,
So smiles are holy or writhings fell,
On the face that 's all alone ; —
But its rapture or tempest dies away,
And its greeting is that of yesterday,
When a guest uplifts his own.

O human face ! mysterious sea !
In vain do we try to fathom thee,
So baffling is thy repose.
So quickly thou hidest all within,
So faintly thou hintest at what has been
Of passions or loves or woes.

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BEYOND.



HAVE a friend, I cannot tell just where,
For out of sight and hearing he has gone;
Yet now, as once, I breathe for him a prayer,
Although his name is carved upon a stone.

O blessed habit of the lips and heart!
Not to be broken by the might of Death.
A soul beyond seems so less far apart
If daily named to Heaven with fervid breath.

Is one at rest with God, we well may think,
He overhears the prayer we pray for him;
Our Father lets us keep this sacred link;
The hand of Prayer, Love's holy lamp can trim.

And were the dead once heedless of God's will,
Needing our prayer that he might be forgiven;
Against all creeds, that prayer uprises still,
With the dim hope of pardon and of Heaven.



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LIVING BY THE MINUTE.



ET us live only by the minute,
Not even by the day or hour;
Our life has too much hazard in it
To dare forespend one moment's power.

The glance of Fear toward to-morrow
Can paralyze the hand to-day;
The gaze of Hope such light can borrow
As dazzles Duty on her way.

Just seventy heart-beats to the minute;
So God has typed our seventy years.
This moment is a life;— begin it
As though unknown were smiles or tears.

What though it bring to thee a sadness!
Still, one short life will be well-spent;
And if it flow to thee with gladness,
Then drink with joy what God hath sent.

So living only by the minute,
In toil or rest, or joy or strife;
Is there perfection? Thou shalt win it
Through living well the minute's life.

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HER FACE.



T minds me of a landscape in the May,
When rarest mist wraps all the distant height;
The base smiles clear, and shows the lights at play,
And every feature is revealed to sight.

So round her mouth the light in beauty breaks,
The power to read her very heart seems given;
But lo! her brow Thought's veil of mystery takes,
And no one sees how near she is to Heaven!

REGRET.



N a day that vainly lent
Models for the poet's skill,
Wandering where the willows bent
Looking down into the rill,
At sight of their own beauty, still,
I lost what nothing can restore.
Into a fair woman's hold,
Dropped my secret, sacred thought;
Distance, winter, long and cold,
Wither what her beauty wrought—

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Hers and June's; now all is naught,
I would have my thought once more.

Frozen is the little brook,
Which bare willows overlook;
Shrivelled are the fern and brake
That those red lips bade me take;
And the words that stole out then
Never can be fresh again.
Yet they died not with the leaf;
Had they, it were faint relief —
Faint relief to know *that* dead
Which I would were all unsaid.
Yet for this I grudge it so: —
When I to my true-heart go,
With a guileless jealousy
Her dear eyes will question me, —
Then what would I give to say,
"I ne'er said it till to-day!"

THE PRYING HAND.

OUT of a darkened room I drew my friend,
And knowing every step and where was light,
Assured my leading to be safe as sight,
And bade her utterly on that depend.

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Then leaned she on me as secure from harm
  Till, as we reached the darkest place of all,
  I heard uncertain touches on the wall
And felt a lessening weight upon my arm.

How deeply Love, both human and divine,
  Must feel the hurt, when Trust, impelled by Doubt,
  Leans one arm less to stretch the other out,
And, groping, does but half of self resign!

NEVER AND NO MORE.

Not Death himself
Hath hands so flinty, and so freezing cold,
As hath this Never. Over what was ours
Death leaves with most of us a dim perhaps
That floats through silence, undefined in form,
Tormenting fancy, not destroying hope.
No More! Intense is this in awfulness;
But its dread fiat not to be revoked,
That death, or circumstance, — that living death, —
Must put an endless end to all most dear,
Is far less dread than Never's mandate is,
Because the very more implies the once.
Never is merciless beyond compare,
Because the precious once dies in his clutch,

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That once which makes the always of great souls.
Somewhere in every heart the Never strikes,
Dealing a death-blow to some begging wish;
If for an object that is loved as life,
It is as though importunate Desire
Were the undying soul of dying Hope
Whose body this relentless Never kills,
Leaving its spirit in eternal thirst.

THE CHECK.



S the night steals in, I bless her,
Yet not now for rest alone;
I feel that she draws me closer
To some change I have not known.

But what does this glad subtraction
Of a day of life imply?
A happy change may be nearer,
But — some friend must the sooner die!

Impatient heart! that wouldst hasten
To meet what the years may bring;
Think what to-day has taken,
And fast to the morrow cling.

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LAST DAYS OF BYRON.

JUST at the point
Of facing death in fronting Moslem steel,
Lo! in the fever's silent strife he sank!
Out of the valorous yet chaotic Greeks
His skill and nerve had gathered ordered ranks.
May not the chaos of his passions first
Have heard light summoned, and have felt its dawn?
May not the liberty of God's own truth
Have struck some shackles of his bondage off
While he was seeking to make others free?
Amid the blackness we must see and shun,
Gleams out a light wherein is read the hint
Of the surpassing glory sin eclipsed.
Who knows what age or illness might have wrought?
Those two reformers of an evil life,
That have of vilest sinners moulded saints.
Be it not ours to cover vice of his,
But to remember we have seen his worst,
Which most men hide as misers hide their hoard.

While Thought drinks in the purest tones he struck,
All her nerves tremble with bewildered joy:
Round some creations such a splendor burns,
He seems himself the very lyric god,

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Encircling whom, great passions of the soul
With linkéd hands, like maids of Helicon,
Accord his power in faultless harmonies.
Greece lives forever in his splendid verse,
Which, should her relics utter ruins lie,
Could bound her glory with immortal lines.
Fitting that he who loved and sang of her
Should breathe his life out on her lovely shore!
Wave-beaten Missolonghi, it is thou
That hold'st the parting secrets of that soul
Not walled like thee, with strength, but like thyself
Beaten forever by the mighty sea!

AUTUMN.

IN BREEZE.

 OW fast she drops her blazing leaves in mirth!
Hark! how she laughs to see them heap the earth;
To see the happy children gather them,
As though each color were a precious gem!

IN CALM.

How slow and stately doth her leafage fall!
Dethroned, she holds her royalty through all,
Reluctant still to let her glories down
As is a monarch parting with his crown.

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AFTER READING "THE NEW DAY."



OW subtly bound these little brilliants are!
Towards one centre seems their radiance thrown;
Around the white neck of some queen unknown,
We see them flashing, while we stand afar.

The world must not come near enough to see
The links that keep them in their royal place;
That would betray the mystic wearer's face:—
Ah! she can feel the clasp of unity!

HEMMED IN.



O other presence in the universe
So longed I for as thine:
The blessing came, but shadowed by a curse.
What ailed this heart of mine?

At sight of thee it straightway turned to lead,
And sank me by its weight.
How poor and weak the scanty words I said!
Far less like love than hate.

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Ah! this is it. Love's possibilities
Of speech and sign are rare:
So mighty then each little moment is,
It numbs me like despair.

I stood in midst of opportunity,
Bewildered by the shock:
Its bounty fell so suddenly on me
It hemmed me in like rock.

HOPES AND MEMORIES.



S little children running on before,
To those who follow, backward glances throw,
And ever as they near the household door,
With every watchful smile, more eager grow;

So do young hopes before fond memories run,
Looking behind, their parent smiles to meet;
Bounding with bolder step at every one,
But oft returning for assurance sweet.



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MISSED.



OW I miss my little girl,
Her who wore this beamy curl;
As I slowly lay it by
Steals a tear behind the sigh.

How I miss my little girl!
Her whose voice, like streamlet's purl,
Babbled low and long and sweet,
Giving lightness to my feet.

How I miss her, even yet!
Nor her faults do I forget,—
Many a time they made me sigh;
What of that if she were by?

Where then have I lost my child?
Into Heaven is she beguiled?
Nay, I strow no little sod,
For she is not yet with God.

But strange powers, they call the Years,
Wrought the loss that brings my tears;
Tiny chair behind the door,
They have emptied evermore.

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They have hushed the pleasant noise,
Into darkness cast the toys;
Death, it sometimes seems to me,
Not much crueller could be.

Let me lose my ashen mood
In to-day's ripe motherhood;
Vain my little girl to summon,
But — I own a little woman.

THE TELEPHONE.



H! what a marvel of electric might,
That makes the ear the conqueror of space,
And gives us all of presence but the sight,
When miles of dark and distance hide the face.

Soul! is not this thy very analogue?
Do not strange thoughts come sounding through thee thus?
Ay, clear, sometimes, as if there were no clog
To shut remotest being out from us!

Low notes are said through this strange instrument
To reach the listener with distinctest tone;
So inmost thoughts, from man or angel sent,
Strike through the soul's aerial telephone!

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BLIND.



LL the looks those eyes can cast
Must on precious faces fall —
O Remembrance! fix them fast,
Ere the darkness cover all.

What can move him more than this?
Sons and daughters from afar
Bring their youngest, lest he miss
Seeing what their treasures are.

None too soon. Poor longing eyes,
All their seeing has been done!
But the inner light shall rise,
That shall be the blind man's sun.

Little Mary, grandpa's pet,
Softly climbs upon his chair.
Oh! how close a child can get
Without breaking in on prayer.

Lips are moving close to hers,
And though large eyes open wide,
Yet she neither speaks nor stirs,
Having found a place to hide.

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Just between the head and breast
She has wedged her golden hair,
On his silver locks to rest,
Casting added glory there.

Lying there so quietly,
Mary hears her own sweet name,—
Looks up eagerly to see
For what end the summons came:

Thinking not, though often told,
Of a some one gone before,
Whose dear name she has in hold,
For whose sake she's loved the more.

Blind, all blind, yet, little one,
To a Mary he can see
Do these prayerful whispers run,
Though he loves you tenderly.

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IN MAY.

WHY, ye glories of to-day,
Will ye bring a wet cheek here?
Light and odor, song and breeze,
In delicious concord play;
What but care should fret the tear
When we walk midst joys like these?

It is all too dark to see
Sometimes, what our spirits hold;
All too damp for chords to sound,
Or the rain falls noisily,
Or the wind is fierce and cold,
And our gentle thoughts are bound.

But the tender looks of May
Set them free and light the soul;—
Overwhelmed at seeing there
All we ever laid away,
Rapturous sadness gains control:
Tears must come, but not of care.

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THE LIGHT OF A CHILD'S EYE.



N the heart of man is a guilty thought,
And while charmed by its wizard power,
He sees for his will great shackles wrought;
He 's a slave in another hour.

With a plunge as for very life, he turns:
"God save me," is heard in Heaven;
And the flame of his passion dimly burns—
It is out — into darkness driven.

While the air of his soul is growing clear,
He meets the face of a child;
And he thinks with awe, as it comes so near,
"Thank God! I am not defiled.

"Else how fierce were the angor in my heart,
At sight of this innocent,
Who with reverent look sets me apart,
As worthy of all content."

O victory! ever so sweet to win,
Thou art sweetest here, I know,
When the light of a childish eye shines in
On the soul's retreating foe.

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MY LOVE CAN HOLD HIS OWN.



ERE is a sad, worn letter, ten years old,
With threatened gaps along each well-pressed fold;
Yet though it tells of illness and of death,
I read it over now with tranquil breath.

When first it came, with strength of my despair
I paled and groaned, and even turned from prayer,
Despised what looked like comfort yet was none,
And bade the friends that brought it me begone.

It seemed I better could have spared them all
Than just the one on whom 't were vain to call:
He was my world, and so the world seemed dead.
Why should all these be living in his stead?

I thank my God that I have learned to bow,
But fain would have submission only now:
I fear, sometimes, when on that once I dwell,
That Time, in healing, does his work too well.

I have a jealous feeling for the dead,
Lest some one else restore what Death has shed:
I wonder at my laugh and careless jest,
When he is dust who could have shared them best.

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But in some ill that I can scarcely bear
I read this letter with redoubled care;
And when Pain comes with voiceless prophecy,
Here doth the sweetest comfort wait for me.

I will not fear: my love can hold his own;
So something tells me when my soul 's alone:
In tardy joys though now I find content,
Yet after him the homeward look is sent!

THE CENTENNIAL AT PHILADELPHIA.

JULY 4, 1876.

HERE stands the Nation's mighty Thought,
With look and attitude sublime;
Both her colossal arms stretched out,
Seeking two equal bounds of time.

One hand rests on the very day
When Freedom struggled from the womb;
The other, groping on its way,
Finds all this multitude a tomb!

The eyes of Thought, first backward cast,
Send fiery pæans from their deep;
But, searching all her country's past,
Some great, immortal tears they weep.

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The eyes of Thought now onward tend,
  Peopling the far, white mystery
With life that shall from ours descend,
  A mighty concourse of the free.

Here stands the Nation's mighty Thought!
  A hundred years behind, before,
Her arm and eye have reached, and brought
  What make us one forevermore.

This centre of the Keystone State
  Locks many nations in its hold,
And all the clashing notes of fate
  To harmony has Peace controlled.

Great City of Fraternal Love,
  How well the worlds have met in thee;
So, whither all the nations move,
  God's Peace-built City let it be!

Unto the everlasting Now,
  The Nation's Thought uplifts her sight;
An awful splendor on her brow,
  With Patmos glory in its light.

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SPRINGS.



ITH unaccustomed tenderness
The wayward son enfolds his mother;
With strange and sudden gentleness
The sister looks upon her brother.

The babe is tightened in the hold,
With gushes of maternal passion;
The wife and husband show their love
After the maid's and lover's fashion.

And some white face with moveless lids
That can be wet with tears no longer,
Staying perchance life's wonted way
Has made love's current flow the stronger.

Or, it may be, in last night's dream,
Each felt what might be Death's aggression;
And waking, tearful Love ran forth,
To prove still safe his own possession.



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IMPERFECT JOY.

WHERE God reveals His inmost thoughts to man,
In mighty marvels of the land and sea;
Where Art hath caught as nearly as she can
These great expressions of Divinity;
There, even there, this thought will dim delight,
That some will pass them as a common sight.

Where Place draws glory from some splendid deed
That starlike shines in Clio's crowded roll;
As if our rising ardor to impede,
There weighs on ours some leaden eye or soul.
How from its Eden doth the spirit slide,
If reptile souls across its pathway glide!



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THOUGHT.

NOW earth and sky are at their loveliest,
Nor toil, nor ghost of it, can haunt my rest,
This is the time for Thought.
If she but come and through my leisure bide,
Alone with her I shall be satisfied,
Nor shall I live for naught.

She comes as bidden, but with languid pace,
And after gazing vaguely in my face,
Without a word she turns.
What ails my Thought? What means this mockery?
Where has she gone? What would she have of me?
My soul with anger burns.

This waiting tablet let me thrust away,
It must be bare of all I wish to-day;—
Of what avail is it
To drink this glory round and overhead,
Since Thought has turned her back on me and fled,
And I alone must sit?

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There may not come another day like this;
Yet all its possibilities I miss,
Since Thought has left me so.
Now will I yield myself to utter rest,
Nor give a thought to Thought, my fickle guest,
But, like a child, will go

And lie all listless on the shady height,
With brook and birds and flowers in my sight:—
But — some one else is here!
Who but my Thought? Shut are her large, deep eyes,
On Beauty's bosom fast asleep she lies,
Content I linger near.

Now for to-day I have no further care,
Willing am I to have my tablet bare,
My sleeping Thought to see;—
With every long, still breath she draws in strength,
I feel her presence; she will wake at length
And give herself to me.



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LONGFELLOW.

I.

THE CRAIGIE HOUSE:

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AND LONGFELLOW'S HOME.



EHOLD! a double glory resteth here,
Wherein was housed in Revolution's time
A man who while a king refused a throne,
Save in his country's grateful heart alone;
And who by singleness of soul sublime
Has made his name to every people dear.

And he who fills the house with light to-day
Keeps the old relics in their primal place,
Reviving yet the age of Washington:
Poet and statesman,—how their fame is one
In greatness, goodness, and a world's embrace,
Though time and genius widely part their way!

A reverent love has kept the olden pile
Almost untouched by innovating hands;
Nor has Art stinted Nature,—here she lies
In ancient ampleness to bless the eyes.
Beyond are spread the open meadow-lands
That stretch away to catch the river's smile.

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From massive clumps of lofty lilac-trees
Pours forth the searching fragrance of the spring,
Greeting the sense, while yet unseen the source ;
And when the summer's glow hath spent its force,
And birds no more in elms and lindens sing,
Millions of winy leaves inflame the breeze.

And winter holds here an unwonted sway ;
The towering trees with honors long since dead,
And charged with snows, still leave the fancy warm
To feel that Time's or Nature's chilling storm
By Fame eternal shall be buffeted,
Nor vital greatness suffer cold decay.

But let the pilgrim come what time he will,
Here is evoked Thought's majesty of mood ;
Here she moves on with slow, imperial gait,
Since two such Presences upon her wait.
Lo ! Past and Present mix, — a mighty flood
Beside whose stately flow the lips grow still.



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II.

ON HIS BIRTHDAY.



BOY is watching on his own fair shore
The harbor, with its multitude of ships ;
He little thinks what greatness lies in store,
Though even now the soul hath touched the lips.
His boundless future, there, he gazes at,
His fame hereafter will be likest that.

It is to-day. Across the mighty deep
Of human souls his songs forever move ;
Like freighted ships their destined ways they keep,
Yet soon or late, all harbors richer prove
When in there float the white sails of his thought.
Together, lo ! the ends of earth are brought.

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III.

AFTER READING "MORITURI SALUTAMUS."

> "Ye against whose familiar names not yet
> The fatal asterisk of death is set."

BE that sad year, O poet! very far
That proves thee mortal by the little star.
Yet since thy thoughts live daily in our own,
And leave no heart to weep or smile alone;
Since they are rooted in our souls, and so
Will live forever whither those shall go,
Though some late asterisk may mark thy name,
It never will be set against thy fame!
For the world's fervent love and praise of thee
Have starred it first with immortality.



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PARABLE OF THE APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

PERFECT LIFE AND WORK.



HE beautiful things of the May are dying,
The clustered lilacs turn pale and sere;
The lilies rusty and limp are lying,
And we mourn for May with the rosebuds near.

The beautiful things of the May are flying,
The pink and white fruit-blooms wing the breeze,
And oh! what a beautiful death — in sighing
To vanish away from sight like these.

The beautiful things of the May are dying,
But lo! there are some that linger late;—
For the apple-blossoms, the winds defying,
In all their roseate glory wait.

And soon will these beautiful things be flying,
Before they are touched by a dark decay;
Yet what they leave here will begin supplying
Fruit that will last through another May.

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FORECAST.

WHEN I, forever out of human sight,
Shall seem beyond the wish for anything,
Oh, then believe, at morning and at night,
My soul shall listen for thy whispering!

The work of life may so fill up the day
That not a thought of me shall venture there;
And after labor, Love may charm away
What could not enter for the press of care.

But when thou hast bidden all this world good-night,
And entered that which lies so close to mine,
Call me by name—it is my angel's right—
And I shall hear thee, though I give no sign.

When morn undoes the high, white gates of sleep,
Pause, as thou comest forth, to speak to me:
It may seem vain, for silence will be deep,
But uttered wishes wait on prophecy.

And when some day far distant thou dost feel
That night and morrow will no longer come,
The pitying Heart will let me then reveal
My presence to thee on the passage Home.

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ARNOLD VON WINKELRIED.

TRUE, Sempach, thou hast sunken to decay,
But high thy fame although thy walls are low,
Since Winkelried here cast his life away
For man and freedom, centuries ago.

Hundreds of years since armies struggled here,
And conquest followed Arnold's noble fate!
Still do the Switzers gather every year
Upon this field that day to celebrate.

His was no reckless, disappointed life,
Content with war for lack of peace at home;
He owned sweet children and a tender wife,
And wore the hope of happy years to come.

But patriot passion all his soul possessed,
When with one plunge he made an army reel;
Sheathed Austrian spears within his valiant breast,
And broke, with outstretched arms, their wall of steel!

O Liberty! through what a serried host
Thou held'st thy march sublimely on that day;
At what an awful, what a splendid cost
Did Arnold open unto thee the way!

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All else as nothing, freedom but in view—
Oh! what an inspiration in that deed!
Soul, though thy foe be dense, press on, cut through,
With sacrifice of self—like Winkelried!

RECOMPENSE.

EVERY time this sweet young face
Looks upon me from the wall;
Death, it seems, hath one dear grace
That can make amends for all.

After wearing years have sped,
This will then be true as now
To the beauty of the dead,
To her lovely, lineless brow.

Had time been her heritage,
Then this picture some far day,
When her face was marred with age
And this flowing glory gray,

Would but make one draw a sigh
That such beauty must grow old;
Now—the latest by and by
Still will leave her youth untold.

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Every time this pictured face
Seems to give its smile to me,
Then I thank death for the grace
That keeps one young immortally.

RECAST.



ARTHAGE now driven to extremity,
Relentless Rome a third time at her gates,
At last decrees to set her prisoners free,
That weapons may be moulded of their weights.

O mighty Power! our foe stands just without,
And we are weaponless that stand within;
But one chance more of putting them to rout —
The loosing of the powers so bound by sin.

Melt, melt their chains in pain's fierce, fiery glow,
Recast these passions into battle-swords,
And give the might to deal the deadly blow;
Or else, like Carthage, fall with swollen cords.

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INNER PERCEPTION.



CLEARLY spoke and yet no answer came,
My words thrice uttered, it was still the same,
While eyes that hinted not of any ill
Seemed to be waiting on their owner's will.

"Two precious powers hath she lost," thought I,
"But though she hears not nor can speak reply,
Strange, since the eyes seem looking into mine,
She does not greet me with some common sign."

At last it crossed me, "Is there blindness too?
Have those quick eyes no real work to do?
What if to hers a tender hand I reach!
A touch can carry pity more than speech."

But even ere the flash of thought went out,
Her lips were parted and resolved my doubt;
Startled at words, still more was I to hear
That though no sound could reach the closèd ear,

And though death's darkness hung upon the eye,
Yet still she had the sense of some one nigh.
"If it be so," — she blindly reached her hand, —
"Take this in yours that I may understand!"

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Do not dear spirits daily come to us?
Are not we conscious of their presence thus?
With eyes, we see not; want the hearing ear,
But the soul feels another soul is near.

THE SECRET OF VICTORY.



UCH was the might of Terra's giant son,
He never fought but that he vanquished too;
Thousands and thousands had his power undone,
Yet still the secret of that power none knew.

In this it lay — his mother's potent touch.
Her fiery heart sent conquest into his.
Yet what if known? Avails a secret much
When wed to knowledge helpless weakness is?

Yet one is strong, and awful Hercules,
Now hotly struggles with the wrestler's might;
And throws him, too, but finds by swift degrees
That falls but nerve Antæus for the fight.

Then with strained strength that made his veins stand out
More than all labors he had done before,
And muscles tense as iron through his doubt,
Antæus' clinging feet from earth he tore.

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Who strangled serpents in his infant hold,
  Strangled this lifted monster in the air;
Although it stands not with the Twelve enrolled,
  Which of those Toils can with this one compare?

O Truth! thou art the struggling Hercules
  Coping with Error of Antæan strength: —
Once wrenched from Earth upon thy grappling knees,
  In Heaven's pure air it shall be slain at length.

OVER THE DEAD.



EAR words were those she needed not to say:
  "Love, wilt thou always, always think of me,
No matter where I go, how long I stay?"
  And now she 's gone to stay eternally.

Does she remember what she asked of me?
  Of all I gave her will she now take care?
Is not love, after all, a vanity,
  Left like the pearls she nevermore will wear?

Nay, why, if vain is all my tender thought,
  Her yearning question of that far-off day?
Her soul, presentient of a want, had taught
  Those lips to plead "Remember me alway."

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A DAISY FROM THE PARTHENON.

FIELD-DAISIES spreading lavish as the light,
How loved they are of all who paint and sing!
Yet dearer far are they unto my sight
Now that I know the precincts whence they spring.

This very one looked from the Parthenon;
O simple flower, what splendid fate was thine!
Now the Greek glory is about thee thrown,
And oldest archives seem thy leaves to line.

For me hereafter shall the daisies hold
Hints of the Virgin's Temple in their face;
Of fabled Phidian wonders, white and gold,
Shall fancy mind me in each common place.

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THE LIVING BOOK.



HIS bears the seal of immortality,
For every soul that reads it, feels the search
Of answering thought, and thousands there may be
Saying at once, "How straight that looks at me!"
Nor child nor fool it leaveth in the lurch;
But, like the eyes that mark great Guido's fame,
It follows every one, as if by name.

WHO IS MINE, AND WHOSE AM I?



EILED within the evening shadows,
Is a lately widowed heart,
Pondering on the awful mystery
That has forced two lives apart.

Yet with hopes that always linger
Of the nearness of the dead,
Of the mayhap here and after,
Is she vaguely comforted;

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Till her timid trust is startled
By a memory astir:
Whom she mourns had loved another
Ere he wooed and wedded her.

In the dark of soul and nature
Do these haunting questions fly:
Was my union made forever?
Who is mine and whose am I?

Tortured spirit! Sweet the message
God hath sent the human heart,
That one day we shall be like Him,
When we see no more in part.

Like Him! Those words hold the glory
That can solve thy ghosts away;
Like Him? Then of His All-presence
We may catch a single ray.

Countless myriads of spirits,
God, at once, is always near;
Yet not one can find love's limit,
Or its interruption fear.

Then may not a soul in Heaven
Ever walk with each of two
In unalienable nearness?
Wherefore put the whose and who?

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In thine own love find the earnest
Of some rich, divine reply;
Blest with that, will be no asking
"Who is mine, and whose am I?"

UNKNOWN.



HE village churchyard has two mounds marked
By a simple tablet of wood alone;
No name is told, and no deed enrolled —
The only inscription is "Unknown."

That word, whose mystery made the Greek
Bow in a worship akin to truth,
Rivets the eye of the passer-by,
Be it dull with age or quick with youth.

And often these nameless, unclaimed graves
Fresh oak-leaves and pale wild-flowers wear;
When days are still, then some gracious will
Weaveth and layeth a garland there.

The stranger threading these tangled ways
Musingly mutters each fresh-found name,
As soon to slip through his mind as lip,
The names of men are so much the same.

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But there doth he pay his longest thought,
Before the tablet that holds a word;
No place — no time — just a word sublime,
That all of our precious things doth gird.

Hemmed in no longer by common bounds
Who slumber beneath this great Unknown,
The tender care of the world shall share;
Ah! theirs is a beautiful name to own!

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

THE years have linings just as goblets do:
The old year is the lining of the new, —
Filled with the wine of precious memories,
The golden *was* doth line the silver *is*.

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CROSSING THE LINE.

PIZARRO'S crimes of perfidy and blood,
So largely due to training, time, and race,
Obscure the brilliance of the hero still;
Yet once, at least, immortally he stood,
Sublime in utterance, sublime in will,
While looking awful Peril in the face.

He calls his men, — worn out and sore depressed,
Yet presence answers quick their leader's word.
All further ventures would they now resign,
But lo! Pizarro traces with his sword,
Along drear Gallo's sand, the telling line
From west to east, and thus his band addressed:

"On that side, comrades, toil and hunger wait,
Battle and death — for some their lives must lose;
On this side, truly, safety lies, but ah!
On that, the riches of a splendid state;
On this, but poverty and Panama; —
Now, as becomes the brave Castilian, choose!

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"As for myself, I go towards the south,
Let who will follow!" and he crossed that bound
Like Rubicon, immortal, though in sand.
Spurred by his doughty foot and daring mouth,
There followed thirteen of his little band;—
The die was cast — at length, Peru was found!

When powers that serve thee flag, since foiled so long,
Summon them, soul! Draw what Pizarro drew;
Point to that land of riches, this of lack;
Speak as he spake, then cross the line as strong,
Leaving poor Panama behind thy back,
To find, at last, the glory of Peru!

WOODBINES IN OCTOBER.



S dyed in blood, the streaming vines appear,
While long and low the wind about them grieves;
The heart of Autumn must have broken here
And poured its treasure out upon the leaves.



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FOR HER SWEET SAKE.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF M. B. M.

FOR her sweet sake consent to call death fair,
However woful it may seem to-day;
Over the aching heart no mourning wear,
And from her peace cast noisy gloom away.

What strength was shut within that flower-like form!
How largely did she conquer self and ill!
Both thought and tears must take the soul by storm,
At what her heart endured ere it was still.

When such as she give up their patient breath,
All sorrow into aspiration turns;
Life comes to be the dearest friend of death,
And, spite of fear, with holy passion burns.

Then give her now her will, nor call death dread,
Nor through the earth's thick silence try to grope;
Her lovely being still is near, not dead:
So strong with life are memory and hope.

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SATISFIED.



IFE is unutterably dear,
God makes to-day so fair;
Though Heaven is better — being here,
I long not to be there.

The weights of life are pressing still,
Not one of them may fall;
Yet such strong joys my spirit fill,
That I can bear them all.

Though Care and Grief are at my side,
There would I let them stay,
And still be ever satisfied
With beautiful To-day!

THE MAIDEN NAME.



HE housewife, folding her linen up,
Lingers with suddenly tender care
Over a worn though unmarred piece
Marked with the name she used to bear.

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Childhood and youth are again with her,
In all their bounty and fresh delight;
The faces of kindred; where they dwelt;
All are passing before her sight.

The cunning work of that far-off time
Enchains her in tearful revery,
With a thin hand on the hoary head;—
Oh, once how fair were Hope and she!

The beautiful letters still so clear
She wrote, and wreathed with the flowery vine,
While Wedded Happiness stood without,
Whispering, "I shall soon be thine."

Dear revelations of all that time
And death have stolen from her since then
Brighten and sadden alternately
The eye of threescore years and ten.

"Lay by this relic; the name is dear,
Linking my girlhood and wifehood so,
Ay! let me whisper it softer yet,—
Sacred to widowhood's early woe.

"Lay by this relic; it covered him
Ere the grave took in its trust to keep;
'T is a common clasp to most precious loves,
Cover me with it when I 'm asleep."

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RESTORED.

WHATEVER solace loss can draw from Art
I drew from out the picture in my hand,
Then fancied that the memory in my heart
Surpassed the finest artist in the land.

I looked within, and there the image stirred,
Touched with the tint of life and full of soul;
The lips just parting with a wonted word,
As near my cheek the happy vision stole.

But on a sudden, darkness made it naught,
Leaving me lonely as a lonely isle,
And on the turbid, rapid tide of thought
There flitted not the sparkle of his smile.

"Ah me!" said I, "must even Memory prove
Too weak to comfort Love as she doth crave?
The vivid sight and sense of him I love —
Must these be also given to the grave?"

And then I thought of Aphrodite's mate,
(How weak in wishing may the poor heart be!)
And wished my lost might have Adonis' fate,
And for a season be restored to me.

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Lo! was he not? For in the deep of night
He lived again and blessed me in a dream,
Without one trace of Death's despoiling might:
Just as of old did my beloved seem.

The ruddy cheek, the full and manly form —
How marvellous that I should find them there,
And feel life's current in caresses warm,
Though in a land more subtile than the air!

I shrank if any called him dead before; —
Oh wondrous meeting of those eyes with mine!
I now will think of him as dead no more,
Since in my dreams their living light can shine.

TO THE WIND.



THOU! whose whence and whither are unknown,
Who never hast been seen of human eye,
Whose doings only we can know thee by,
Thou hast no antitype save God alone.

In might that makes all being tremulous,
In softness softer than a mother's hand,
Thou passest ever over sea and land,
And yet thy presence is but felt by us.

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We name thee, feel thee, yet we know not thee;
Thou wakest fear, joy, gratitude, and peace,
Yet ever doth thy mystery increase;
O Wind! what else is so like Deity!

ALONE.

FAR-REACHING meadows girded by a wood;
And in the depth of this deep solitude
Hardly in ken, a single mower stood.

Whetting his scythe, no sound fell on my ear;
His was the only motion far or near;
Some gloomy bird I could not see, but hear.

What common interest could he have with me?
What with the mass of our humanity?
How isolated must his spirit be!

It gave me pain, and yet I scarce knew why,
To think that just *he lives and he must die*,
Formed with the world his one familiar tie.

But men are held apart by no thick wall;
Lo! the same life-thread holds together all,
Though in the circle far apart they fall.

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WHITTIER.

I.

OAK KNOLL, DANVERS.

THE POET'S HOME.



OW gracious Nature is, and yet half-shy!
The more you search, the more there seems to be
Which longest looking fails to satisfy,
Something eluding you like mystery.

Sighting the friendly roof, an oak-set knoll
That rises midway, gives the place its name;
What comfort that this oak-like, sheltering soul,
With all the bounty of his faith and fame,

Should overshadow such a tragic soil,
And somehow seem to deepen their repose
Whom Superstition tangled in her toil,
And Zeal devoted as the Maker's foes!

The heart of witchcraft shook this very place,
Which has not yet its witchery outgrown!
Felt only now, thank God, in Nature's face
With Genius' liberal light athwart it thrown.

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II.

ON HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.



WO dear, familiar songs that Art has sought
To set the canvas singing to the eye,
But whose expression Color has not caught—
Just these the world might ever know thee by.

Yet sweet Maud Muller and the Barefoot Boy
Leave other songs a wealthy fame to share;
The broken shackle, Nature's calm and joy,
Life's crowding passions — all of these are there.

And thou hast given the pained and erring heart
Such words as fit its inmost solitude;
From Fame, Devotion has not lived apart,
And men grow strong through seeing Greatness good.

Thou feelest all the moment of the Cross,
The ungauged value of a human soul,
And Trust, consenting not to lasting loss,
Lets her large hope in harp-like music roll.

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Thyself Apostle of Love, how meet thy name!
Still bearing love's sweet gospel in thy voice,
Be measure of thy days and his the same,
And some high vision prove the Master's choice.

THE CITY OF US ALL.

SUGGESTED BY "POEMS OF PLACES."

Ah me! with what regret
Must many an eye and soul go wandering here,
Because Remembrance holds no happy light
For them to read the picture-poems by, —
And Hope has set!
Genius and Fancy only make them dear,
Not the recall or reach of blessed sight; —
And with unsated longings they must die.

Yet there is still One Place
Made known to none save by its simple name;
The far-famed traveller hath no vantage there
Beyond the one who never left his home.
All, all the race
Are one in wonder, ignorant the same.
Unanswered still must be the what and where,
Till each to all his fellows hath grown dumb!

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It lieth in no zone,
No zeroed number telleth its degree
From our equator or meridian;
Yet latitude and longitude it hath,
This great Unknown,
And thither gathered shall all nations be;—
Earth's myriad cities haste to meet in One,
When, how, they know not, only track the path!

COMFORT, CHILD!



H! how heavy lie the snows
Where my love went late to rest;
High and chill the burden grows,
She must feel it on her breast.

Near she seemed and I breathed free,
When but living, flowered green
Separated her and me:
What a barrier now between!

"Comfort, child! I can come down
With my brooding love to-night;
Earth and air so pure have grown
I can spread my wings of white!"

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NOT LOST.

IN lengthened silence of a living love,
Our faithful thinking travels strangely far;
We feel sometimes that it has reached the place:
Is longing lost, then, where the angels are?

Two that for many a year had closely lived,
By Circumstance were forced and kept apart;
From youth to age no word between them passed,
While all the way each had this thought at heart:

"Oh that for only once it were allowed
To tell the one that used to live so near
That, through long silence, often Thought goes out
Seeking to break her secrets in his ear!

"Just a few words would last me for a life —
The few such words as I might hear and speak,
But Lot and Place are tyrannous as Death,
And this one favor all in vain I seek."

As tyrannous, ah, yes! they truly are,
But, unlike Death's, uncertain is their reign;
Some miracle may, in the dead of dark,
Undo the prison door for heart and brain.

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Then each to each shall revelations make
Of the long past that flowed so still between;
In what one says of all the time ago,
As in a glass, the other's heart be seen.

If thus on earth, what must it be up There,
When we have passed within the jewelled Gate?
What of the longing that invades our hearts?
What of the souls whom Death doth isolate?

AT TAPPAN.



HIS is the place where André met that death
Whose infamy was keenest of its throes,
And in this place of bravely-yielded breath
His ashes found a fifty-years' repose;

And then, at last, a transatlantic grave,
With those who have been kings in blood or fame,
As Honor here some compensation gave
For that once forfeit to a hero's name.

But whether in the Abbey's glory laid,
Or on so fair but fatal Tappan's shore,
Still at his grave have noble hearts betrayed
The loving pity and regret they bore.

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In view of all he lost — his youth, his love,
And possibilities that wait the brave,
Inward and outward bound, dim visions move
Like passing sails upon the Hudson's wave.

The country's Father! how do we revere
His justice, — Brutus-like in its decree —
With André-sparing mercy, still more dear
Had been his name — if that, indeed, could be!

THE TEST OF GENIUS.



TS voice was such, a soul seemed next to mine,
Nearer than soul had ever come before;
My thought was sounded by a singer's line;
One lonely depth was fathomless no more.

Though searched as if by comprehending sight,
No sense of man or woman entered there;
I only felt with how divine a might
Genius asserts its presence everywhere.



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REMEMBERED AS A FATHER.



OW to be envied was the noiseless speed
With which that life slipped from the earth to Heaven!
Of tearful, sad good-byes, what were the need?
Leaving our door to meet us at the even.

Dear face! it smiled, as if in happy sleep,
To reach where cometh nevermore a care;
Who pass beyond leave fewer here to weep,
While making, too, our larger welcome There.

Fond children's graves keep his from being lone;
Ah! once what bitter tears and groans they cost!
But now when dust and spirit meet their own,
He finds a home with those he wept as lost.

But earth must still be dear, so very dear,
Since holding yet of Heaven so large a part, —
Here still are children, and the wife is here,
Who made the constant spring-tide of his heart.

With him she counted, just the other day,
Of wedded life their six-and-fifty years;
Fresh, bright, and sweet as is this opening May,
They kept their love, if sorrows claimed their tears.

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Though spring seem never spring to her again,
As when the most of life beside her stood,
Yet must this green and bloom console her pain,
Revealing Nature's tender motherhood!

THE POWER OF MUSIC.



OW high those tones are beating, and how strong
Against these frail and tottering walls of clay!
Can they withstand those mighty dashings long?
Do I not feel them even now give way?

What if they should! That soon or late must be;
The broken wall lets forth the soul to light.
O Heaven! what fitter passage into thee,
Than on the wave of music's conquering might!

RHODE ISLAND.



ROM that far island in the midland sea,
Where Rhodian art wrought out a world's surprise,
Did our own Eden island's name arise,
And then at length the State's it grew to be.

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Loved of all generous souls her Founder's name;
And forth from her what stalwart men have sprung!
Gallant in battle, eloquent of tongue,
Philanthropist and soldier give her fame.

Of seven and thirty, this the smallest State,
And yet how powerful and how populous!
Where will and deed, like hers, are valorous,
To narrow bounds is set how large a fate!

No steadier brilliance has been thrown afar
Throughout our history's every darkest night
Than hers, — how lustrous and how wide her light,
Though of the Nation's cluster smallest star!

UNLIKE.

"OH, what a long, long night! — when comes the morn?"
Eyes heavy with their vigils watch the east;
For Hope has promised that when Day is born
The heart from heavy grief shall be released.

"Oh, what a short, short night! — is this the morn
Awaking me so soon to life's stern truth?
Hated be day, that crazeth the forlorn!
Loved be the night, that hides with tender ruth."

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Peace and regret each sunset leaves behind;
Joy and repining morning usherеth in;
Or dawn or evening far apart doth find
Even those souls whose bodies are akin.

WHAT MATTER?



T had been a dreary day,
And night was coming down,
Within its dense and doleful mist,
To cover up the town.

A curtain was left undrawn;
Against the window-pane
Was pressed a careworn face, yet calm
As it in sleep had lain.

Now slowly it turns away,
A hand shuts out the gloom,
And deep content is in the eye,
That meets the lighted room.

"Ah, well! if safely housed,
What matter after all
Whether the day be dark or bright,
On which the night doth fall?"

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The curtain of death shuts out
Life's passion and its pain,
And ever the evening light of Home
Shines sweetest after rain.

THE CHAIR'S SECRET.



ACH in his turn once owned that little chair,
Now strangely dear;
Just for a while I dream my happy care
Again is here.

Before that baby thing was well outgrown
I knew each day,
For not one hour should I be left alone —
Four weeks away!

Come have a secret with me, tiny chair!
In this dull mood,
Before I hide in many a silken square
The well-worn wood,

I mean to write a letter to my sons,
For you to keep;
And do not yield if to the precious ones
Until I sleep.

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Now let me fill Love's words with golden thought,
And hide them here;
When from the dark the treasure shall be brought
Some far-off year,

My boys will need, perhaps, grown hoary men,
What now were lost
Did I not save, to make them richer then,
What absence cost!

"I AM THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.



E think, O Christ, of these sweet words and Thee,
When like Thy love, the lilies' holy scent
Pervades the being with untold content;
When altogether lovely they are seen
Within the shelter of their broad, cool green,
We think, O Christ, of these sweet words and Thee.

We think, O Christ, of these sweet words and Thee,
When midst the lilies, fades the fever-flush
Born of life's toil and struggle, and the hush
Steals over all our grieving and unrest,
As sleep surprises infants on the breast,
We think, O Christ, of these sweet words and Thee.

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SONNETS.

TO C. F.



FRIEND! whose name is closely bound with mine,
How often when thy soul its body wore,
We spake of those who spake with us no more,
And eager sought their nearness to divine.
To-day I stand with just this grave of thine
And the remembrance of the days before,
Which time and place so vividly restore
That sense of death and dust I can resign.
Once it was here thy fancy used to seek,
In Nature's simple play midst flower and tree,
In sudden tremor of a dear grave's grass,
Some subtile recognition: — thus then speak,
O soul that knowest all and now art free,
To her who still can only guess and pass!

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THE SARGASSO GULF.



N mid Atlantic are its mazes spread,
Wide as the basin of our kingly stream;
Barred of all hope that hitherward has led,
Do vessels snared within its meshes seem.
Columbus, first to thread this weedy sea,
Thought he had reached here navigation's bound,
But pushing boldly on till all was free,
At last the longed-for, unknown land was found.
In life's mid-ocean heaves a sea of Doubt: —
Wise are the souls that past it learn to steer;
Yet tangled there, who toiling struggle out,
Finding once more the ocean pathway clear,
Look back in triumph on Sargasso passed,
And, though belated, reach the Land at last.

A RUIN.



HERE is a ruin that can make me weep,
Nor only that, but inly tremble too;
Not death itself can move an awe so deep
As that which lately thrilled my spirit through.
To see the temple sinking to decay
Wherein a soul was beauteously shrined,

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Could hardly touch to pitying tears to day,
For I have seen the ruin of a mind!
Yet now, with harmony of order lost,
Its full proportions overawe the eye;
The shattered arch reveals the grandeur most,
Like the Colossus of the Flavii;
And God be thanked that hope, like some green thing,
Out of the ruin's clefts doth skyward spring!

SHAKESPEARE.



DAM of poets! thou must once have felt
The Almighty's awful nearness unto thee;
Into the nostrils of thy soul seemed dealt
The breath of all the poets yet to be.
Not through long generations didst thou come,
But contact with the Almighty gave thee birth;
Charged with His breathing, what the mighty sum
Of all that thou hast given to the earth!
And is it said, thou often wroughtest so
That holy inspiration was profaned?
Ah! Adam's self hath taught—too well we know
How far he falls who hath such height attained.
Adam of poets, still, despite the dross,—
Thy truth the saviour that redeems from loss!

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MUSIC.

MY being is absorbed in bliss so high
That at the very portal, speech is stayed.
In trembling garments is my joy betrayed,
In eyelids heavy as when sleep is by,
In eyes where passions seem to liquefy,
And, lest the soul slip through them, half-afraid.
Of what, then, is this wondrous music made
That numbs the wish to know where Heaven doth lie?
Of all the splendors all the seasons know;
Of night, and dawn, and tempest of each zone;
Lights, flowers and odors; rains that soothe and stir;
Of loveliest outlines breath and marble show;
All beauties shape her man hath ever known,
All he has felt — that is the soul of her.

MOUNT AGASSIZ.

BEFORE this mountain bore his well-loved name
Whose greatness runs through both the hemispheres,
Whose life-work, after death, but swells his fame,
Whose sudden loss set Science' self in tears, —
I stood upon it; now if I were there
Among the flocking thoughts would this one brood, —

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Mount Agassiz! It must have known such prayer
As rose at Penikese where once he stood
Pleading with Heaven, yet uttering not a word,
Leading the face and spirit of that throng
On through an awe-hinged gate, that swung unheard,
Into His presence where all souls belong: —
So doubtless, here, with noisy words unshod,
Went Prayer in Horeb silence unto God.

AT HAWTHORNE'S GRAVE.



AN any famous marble whose broad shaft
Is lettered full with words of life and death,
Whose base and cap assert the sculptor's craft
In some device that reins the rapid breath;
Can any meet the eye with such a power
As just this fragrant word of simple place?
Had ever small, white stone so rich a dower?
Ever such sovereignty, so little space
As this? Yet best befitted in a word;
Naught would one add for majesty of Fame;
Yet standing here, the fancy in me stirred,
To hedge his rest with that which bears his name,
That Nature might in his memorial share,
Divulging, with her blossoms, who lies there.

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WEDDED IN STORM.



OUNG bride, that findest not a single star
Shining to-night with longed-for prophecy,
Though snowy drifts are swelling near and far,
They need not chill thy happy hope and thee.
If blue had overarched the earth all day,
And heaven were brilliant with its stars to-night,
"A happy omen!" many a guest would say,
And think that Fortune blessed the sacred rite.
Be superstition far from thee, sweet soul:
This snowy robe, in unison with thine,
Nature will doff to-morrow, and the whole
Of this white waste in spring-like freshness shine.
If love be strong, then all adversity
Will melt like snow, and life the greener be.

FROM MARATHON.



UST these two words beneath a little spray
Still freshly green, and tipped with brilliant red;
What wonder should they snatch my faith away?
Such noble birth! can it be credited?
Ay! this has sprung from Glory's very heart,
Who gave it to me plucked it from the mound;

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I see and press what somehow had its part
With those who made the spot immortal ground.
No stony relic; daily breath it drew
In airs that blew two thousand years ago;
Over the deathless hundred-ninety-two,
The green of victory budded into glow.
'T is a rich life-drop that I look upon,
The ruddy fruit of blood sown Marathon.

CÆSAR IN TEARS.



HARSALIA'S victor nearing Egypt's shore,
By rapid journeys over land and sea,
Pursues his mighty rival. Where is he
Whom Cæsar feared a little while before?
In headless ruin! Pompey is no more.
But in the dead what terrors there may be!
That veilèd horror Cæsar's self would flee
Which, for a welcome, base Achillas bore.
The form of gallant Pompey fronts him not;
How dreader yet that gory head of his,
Once dear, so dear to Julia's faithful love!
Julia, in Cæsar's heart all unforgot.
O, well may thought of all that was, that is,
To strongest tears the mighty Cæsar move!

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EPITHALAMIA.

M. T.

FEBRUARY 6, 1873.



F happy greetings could but fly like birds,
And pour our feeling out, devoid of words,
Then shouldst thou hear as sweet a carolling
As though thy bridal day were in the spring.

If every tender thought but had the power
To mould itself into a beauteous flower,
As rare the breath and beauty at thy side,
As though June's heart were throbbing near the bride.

A. L. D.

JUNE 16, 1875.



EW life, beginning on this happy day
That gives its blessing in a wide-spread bloom,
Thine own fair roses far, far longer stay!
And when at last they drop along the way,
Let gracious hopes fill all their fragrant room,
Till it shall seem, June has not gone but come;
And in life's winter, O thou summer bride,
Let summer's soul of sweetness still abide!

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M. G. H.

OCTOBER 24, 1877.



N the cool autumn quiet of the year,
Begins the spring-time of thy wedded life;
And when its far October circleth here,
And thou, dear bride, art then the perfect wife,
Typed by the calm and color of to-day
May love's ripe peace hint nothing of decay.

E. L.

JANUARY 10, 1878.

WITH A VASE CARVED IN LILIES-OF-THE-VALLEY AND FILLED WITH A CLUSTER OF THE SAME.



AY that fair image set within thy soul
Of all that thou wouldst have the future be,
Touched, like Pygmalion's, by divine control,
Glow into life, a dear surprise to thee.

O lilies! let your tiny bells to-day,
For bridal blessing ring their sweetest out;
The odor seems to come from far away,
The echoed music of an angel's thought.

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G. H. H.

JUNE 22, 1878.



ONG be thy joys as longest days of June,
And short thy grief as is her shortest night;
But whether shadows fall or late or soon,
Thy face forever wear its summer light!



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TRANSLATIONS.

MY WILL.

AN EPISTLE TO CHLOE.



HAT! Chloe mine! Only to name my death,
Has that had power to cause thee poignant fears?
Thy reason bade me look for mastering breath,
In everything, be worthy of my tears.
About this very death that Error's hand
So dreadful to the timid vulgar paints,
At last, my heart's deep secret understand,
And let love give thee light and soothe thy plaints.
Till now, how many thousand different times
Like sportive Zephyr in the mead at play,
Frolics and laughter have inspired my rhymes,
While of my life they lengthened out the day.
Be sure I taste and feel it joy to be,
Still more than ever now at life's extreme;
Gather the flowers my spring-time offers thee;
The mournful cypress now doth almost seem
A pleasant object that can fascinate.

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Why must it be, so beautiful a chain
As the most faithful love of lovers twain
Is not excepted from the common fate!
What fairer claim to an immortal state?
But since all things in Nature, high or low —
From the mean shrub to cedar spreading wide,
From lowly hut to palace in its pride —
Experience Time's all-devastating blow,
Listen to me! I will this little while
The rays of joy illumining mine eyes,
Now desolate them yielding Time his prize,
And of my dying, speak with playful smile.
Behold, when I shall be upon the brink,
What then my last desires, my latest care;
The cup of pleasure, O my Chloe fair,
Changes to nectar sweet, a bitter drink.
To what did those dull monarchs make pretence?
Crushing down Egypt and her sons so long
With tombs of theirs, those pyramids immense,
Masses of pride and monuments of wrong,
Yet still admired by all the learnèd throng,
Eager admirers, full of confidence.
Within that brazen urn was deep ensphered
What of a nameless king did here remain;
Of this great world where naught exists in vain,
One useful fragment there has disappeared
Where doth a changeless, faithful law ordain
All on a common level to be placed;

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Where man, indeed, when Death has laid him waste,
Is but a link of the eternal chain.
Beautiful Chloe! let us break, oh, never,
Those holy laws that Nature gave — instead,
Beneath these grateful shades, obey them ever,
Within these bowers with verdure carpeted.
Yet dost thou think I limit my desires
Of serving, pleasing, and adoring thee?
To cheat stern Death, behold, my heart aspires.
Yes, Chloe, would that stroke so imminent
Might lay me low close to this lilac-tree.
Nothing I fear — his rage is impotent,
And after death I shall not cease to be.
Alas! I may not have a moment more;
While still I speak to thee, perhaps I go;
For sake of thee and all that I adore,
Grant me this favor, Chloe, I implore;—
Could love entreat thee now in vain? ah, no!
Assure me of my transformation then,
That laid within the charming garden here,
At spring's return, I too may reappear,
In pink or rosebud still to live again.
Yet be it gathered, Chloe, but by thee!
Come pluck me when the dawn is breaking fair,
Still let thy beauteous breast be decked by me,
Still may I greet it, breathing sweetly there.
I love to think that from thy lips will start
For me these words, in some deep ecstasy:

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"Dear love, yes, living in this flower thou art,
This tender glow and vivid hue impart
The enchanting image of thy flame for me;
Thou feelest still the hand that presses thee,
And the delight of being near my heart!"

François Marie Arouet de Voltaire.

VENICE.



N rosy Venice' breast
The gondola 's at rest;
No fisher is in sight,
Not a light.

Lone seated on the strand,
Uplifts the lion grand
His foot of bronze on high
Against the sky.

As if with resting wing
Like herons in a ring,
Vessels and shallops keep
Their quiet sleep

Upon the vapory bay;
And when the light winds play,
Their pennons, lately whist,
Cross in the mist.

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The moon is now concealed,
And now but half revealed,
Veiling her face so pale
With starry veil.

In convent of Sainte-Croix
Thus doth the abbess draw
Her ample-folded cape
Round her fair shape.

The palace of the knight,
The staircases so white,
The solemn porticos,
Are in repose.

Each bridge and thoroughfare,
The gloomy statues there,
The gulf which trembles so
When the winds blow,

All still, save guards who pace,
With halberds long, their space,
Watching the battled walls
Of arsenals.

* * * * *

Alfred de Musset.

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AIGUES-MORTES.

FOREVER misery and sure decay
Succeed a haughty pride and mighty sway.
Aigues-Mortes, whose twenty towers still face the sea,
Consumptive city, sinking wretchedly,
Dies like an owl in hollow of her nest;
Like shrivelled knight still in full armor drest;
As in the almshouse yard the beggar dies,
With naught to bless him but the summer skies.
Bordered with huts of reeds is old Aigues-Mortes,
Some noble ships still anchor in its port.
Harassed by want the moody fisher bends,
With wood as old, some shattered wherry mends.
And yet this place of gasping want and pain
Can count its golden links in time's long chain.
These walls still standing as of old they stood,
Whose dull-hued verdure paints the solitude,
Once held the Orient's most precious store,
And turbaned Moslems, wave-like, pressed the shore.
In holy anger, twice a pilgrim king
Hence set his thousand galleys on the wing,
When full of zeal to work his high design,
And sweep the Crescent out of Palestine.
Here haughty barons clad in coats of mail

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(Venice had linked and burnished every scale)
Waved from their glittering helmets, floating wide
The ostrich-plume or pheasant-crest of pride.
O'er all the oriflamme here floated free,
Brought from the gloomy shades of St. Denis,
When France commanded, danger pressing nigh,
That all her sons should conquer or should die.
Two peoples, figured in their kings, here met;
And with a kiss the seal of peace was set.
Gold, purple, azure, for the jousts were spread,
Vying in splendor with the heavens o'erhead;
Afar was borne the martial trumpet's sound,
The charger's hoofs impatient smote the ground,
From splendid balconies there fluttered now
Fair ladies' gloves to greet the victor's brow.
Lo! all now sleeps, — vanished the splendid train,
These silent shores alone to us remain.
In the dry marsh is heard the plaintive bird
Whose heavy flight the tamarisk has stirred;
The wave that rocks with solemn beat and slow
Like an eternal pendule to and fro.

Jean Reboul.

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NÎMES.

NO old cathedral here doth skyward tower,
Nor ancient cloister with dark corridor,
Where blazoned stones are said at midnight's hour
To rise from out the floor.

Here are no steeples fretted to the light,
Whose heaven-invading spires with pride upshoot;
With joinèd hands here kneels no sculptured knight,
At Gothic coffin's foot.

Here no Madonna of the woods doth stand,
Where for her absent lord the châtelaine prayed,
Nor by the herdsman, lifted cap in hand,
Are Aves longer said.

And here no crenelled castle's mossy wall
Bristles with turrets and with parapets,
Which ocean, with its ceaseless rise and fall,
Monotonously frets.

But pagan Rome still lives here, though asleep;
Her flying eagle, with all-conquering wing,
Left nowhere else her talons' print so deep
As in the place I sing.

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The palace, circus, temple here are seen,
A noble monument though in decay,
And everywhere the Past shows what has been,
The Future to dismay.

There fallen front of some triumphal gate
Foreshows the destiny of bright To-day;
Here gods and death now share the same estate,—
Mixed in one urn are they.

The Gaul and Thracian stained the arena's space,
Content to be applauded ere their death,
Before this people-king who wished with grace
To have them yield their breath.

Steeped in delicious perfumes came the knights;
In Eastern robes that swept these stones they pressed,
Midst venal beauties and these fierce delights,
To charm the listless breast.

Brilliant effeminates! alone amused
(Pleasure's abuse had hardened so their heart)
With scenes of passion where life's blood effused,
Where only Death took part.

And then the basilic with splendid frieze
Like to a god bronzed in the censer's glow;
And carved acanthus leaves that evening's breeze
Seems swaying to and fro.

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Showing its crumbling wall through smiling bowers,
The triple goddess' temple in decay;
Just like a wrinkled forehead under flowers,
Peep out the ruins gray.

Ruins where poets come to dream at eve,
Ruins wherein are lesser ruins pent;
As exiled prince doth still a refuge give
To those in banishment.

Diana, as she holds her nightly course,
Seems seeking still with melancholy light
On altar riven by the wild-fig's force,
An incense taken flight.

And here the tower which into ether springs;
Neighbor of lightnings is its summit bold;
The aqueduct through air the water brings,
Two mountains in its hold.

Near to these ruins time dissolves so fast,
Brilliant with splendor, the new city see;—
As from a trunk shattered by lightning-blast
Shoots up a thrifty tree.

Jean Reboul.

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THE AMPHITHEATRE OF NÎMES.

REMNANT of giant old, whose magnitude
Can show the scale of Nîmes as once she stood,
The stranger's being thrills with feeling deep,
When thy vast outlines stretch before his eyes;
No stirring reveries in me arise,
For here did boyhood sleep.

I 've heard the thousand-voicèd wind at night
Sweep through thy countless arches in its might,
Till I death's renegades no more can view,
Still with their parting breath not satisfied;
Nor shades of those who in the arena died
Brandish their blades anew.

So often at the public evening fêtes
The brilliant flame has lighted up thy gates,
That red reflections cast on every porch
Recall no more the nightly revelry
When Rome, debauched to gloomy energy,
Burnt Christians for a torch.

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When here I bring the choice friend of my heart
On pilgrimage of poesy or art,
I leave to him to seek where Cæsar swayed,
Place of proconsuls and each noble line,
And where the vestal's finger gave the sign
That plunged the fatal blade.

Dreaming of other days my mind is fain
To build from thought the Gothic wall again,
Catholic cradle of our St. Castor.
Creeping along thy steps as creeps the mould
Along the dead oak's bark, from houses old
The humble people pour.

Again I see the troop of merry girls
Turning the wheel and singing while it whirls,
On soil where bloodshed gave an ample yield, —
Just as the timid dove is sometimes seen
To build where greedy vultures oft have been
Reddening the verdant field.

The wild-fig's leaves o'erhang again to-day
The doorway's arch corroded by decay,
As a dark brow o'erhangs an Afric eye;
The ruins jut from Moorish turrets where
Before St. Martin did thy brave knights swear
To conquer or to die.

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And mail-clad soldiers here, whose sword and lance
Were pledged to keep thee from the foe's advance,
Who braved for thee a thousand fierce assaults;
Guileless profaners of Rome's wondrous art,
The martial swarm made with all-simple heart
Their cells of thy vast vaults.

For Rome was then abandoned so of all,
In her memorials was seen her fall;
Grand monuments in which her pride was placed
Were by the Goth put to an abject use;
What held her sacred ashes found abuse,
Into a trough debased.

Jean Rebou'.

THE LAST SIGH OF THE MOOR.

THE cavalier who hastes the height to gain,
Pale and with trembling knees,
Is Boabdil, king of the Moors of Spain,
Who could have died, yet flees.
To Spaniards now Granada is restored,
Crescent doth yield to cross,
By Boabdil, with tears not blood deplored,
Is his dear city's loss.
Upon a rock, Sigh of the Moor, they call,
Boabdil sat, and cast
On far Granada and Alhambra's wall
A long look and the last.

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"There I was caliph yesterday,
Lived like a very god below;
The Generalife wooed my stay,
And then the Alhambra's blazing glow.
Clear, floating baths were mine, and there
Sultanas, my three hundred fair,
Bathed, all secure from impious stare.
My name on all the world cast fear.
Alas! my power is now brought low,
My valiant army flies the foe, —
With none to follow me I go,
Save my own shadow, ever near.
Dissolve, dissolve in tears, my eyes!
Up from my armor heave the steel,
Ye deep heart-sighs that now arise!
He conquers to whom Christians kneel!
I go; adieu, fair sky of Spain,
Darro, Jénil, the verdant plain,
The snowy peaks with rosy stain;
Farewell, Granada! loves, adieu!
Sunny Alhambra, vermeil towers,
Fresh gardens filled with wondrous flowers,
In vigils and in dreaming hours,
Absent, I still shall look on you!"

Théophile Gautier.

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THE HELLESPONT.



AVE unto shore in an embrace
Doth ever rue;
The dawn to cheer the wild-flower's face
Distils the dew.
The wind of evening makes its moan
To cypress-tree;
To terebinth the turtle lone
Plains mournfully.

When all save grief hath found repose,
The moon doth speak,
And to the dormant waves disclose
Her pallid cheek.
Sophia, thy white dome doth seem
To greet blue heaven;
And pensively the heaven's calm dream
To God is given.

Or dove or rose, or wave or tomb,
Or rock or tree;
All here below hath somewhere room
Itself to free;
But I alone am all alone,
And there is naught
Save, Hellespont, thy sombre tone,
Gives back my thought!

Théophile Gautier.

IN THE SIERRA.



ILD is my passion for these summits proud!
Their shivering feet plants never dare to set
Where lofty heads hide 'neath a silver shroud;
On these sharp peaks how blunt the plough would get!

No wanton vine, no golden grain is here;
Naught hints of man or of his curse of care;
An eagle-host sails their free atmosphere,
And echo hisses back the bandits' air.

Their dower, beauty, only pleasure yields,
They are not useful, send no gifts abroad,
But I prefer them to the fertile fields,
So far from heaven we never can see God!

Théophile Gautier.

THE ESCURIAL.



ET as a challenge at the mountain's side,
Afar the dark Escurial is descried.
Three hundred feet from earth uplifting thus
On its colossal shoulder firmly braced,
Huge elephant, the cupola defaced,
Granite debauch of Spain's Tiberius.

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Old Pharaoh built not for his mummy's tomb
On mountain side a thing of greater gloom.
The desert's sphinx hath seen no more unrest.
In chimney-tops the stork is sleeping now,
Through all the abandoned courts the grasses grow,
Of monks, priests, soldiers, courtiers, dispossessed.

All would seem dead, but that from everything,
Niche, cornice, fronton, hand of sculptured king,
The flocks of swallows constant flutter keep,
With their wild merriment and charming cries;
Teasing, with flapping wings, to ope his eyes,
This drowsy giant of eternal sleep.

Théophile Gautier.

THE CLOCK AT IRUN.

"Vulnerant omnes, ultima necat."



F great gray stones is built this structure poor,
No sculptured angels do the eye allure,
Nor rib nor frieze is here to decorate,
But just a clock with wooden dial-plate,
Whose Roman letters, sponged by rain so much,
O'errun a face which undergoes no touch.
The eye, by chance, upon the dial falls;
Like words of flame upon Belshazzar's walls,
Like the inscription on the door accurst,
This phrase, black-lettered, on the sight will burst, —

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Four solemn words, four words of Latin state,—
And all in passing here may read their fate:
"Each hour doth wound us, and the last doth slay!"
Yes, Life is truceless warfare day by day,
Unequal warfare with an ambushed foe,
One still untouched by our most skilful blow;
As in a target, in our riddled hearts
Quiver the unseen archer's hurlèd darts.
Condemned we are, — all, all of us must die,
And death begins with life's beginning sigh.

Théophile Gautier.

University Press: John Wilson & Son, Cambridge.

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